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AN ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN A SPECIMEN OF SASQUATCH THROUGH PROLONGED FIELDWORK

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INTRODUCTION

Between May 19, 1984, and September 6, 1984, the author undertook fieldwork in the U.S. Pacific Northwest in an attempt to obtain a specimen of the supposed North American Sasquatch (Bigfoot). The exact location of the fieldwork has been kept confidential for several reasons: the publicity surrounding the expedition became a storm of controversy, with potentially serious legal implications; some hostile members of the public threatened to follow and disrupt the expedition; and I felt a responsibility to keep overzealous people from tramping through the target area, which would compromise the fieldwork, as well as harm the local environment and possibly the intruders as well.[1]

That said, let me state that the method was to obtain, if possible, a Sasquatch specimen with a rifle. Photos are not considered proof, as has been demonstrated in the past. Also, as the physiology of the supposed animal is unknown, attempts at tranquilization would probably not be successful.

Approximately 12 years of prior but low-key interest in, and research on, the subject led to me undertake the endeavor and to finance it personally. My conviction that a real zoological problem existed crystallized when I discovered sets of unidentifiable tracks in 1980 in a remote area of the San Gabriel mountains in southern California.

A large body of physical, circumstantial, and anecdotal evidence indicates that such a creature as Sasquatch actually exists, can be collected, and therefore warrants an attempt to do so. It is clear such an attempt must involve a long-term commitment, and its success can only be through perseverance and determination.

[1] As a general editorial rule, manuscripts, whether they be literature reviews, laboratory analyses, or fieldwork, should contain all relevant details. Due to the circumstances of this particular case, however, an exception is being made. The circumstances involve possible legal action by official agencies in the state where the author conducted fieldwork, as well as disruptive action by private individuals. Keeping the location confidential was a condition set by the author, but in accepting this condition, the Editor in no way sanctions the author's methods of fieldwork or endorses any particular moral or legal position in the matter. The particulars of the fieldwork location are on file with the Society, and are available to any legitimate researchers with the permission of the author.—Editor.

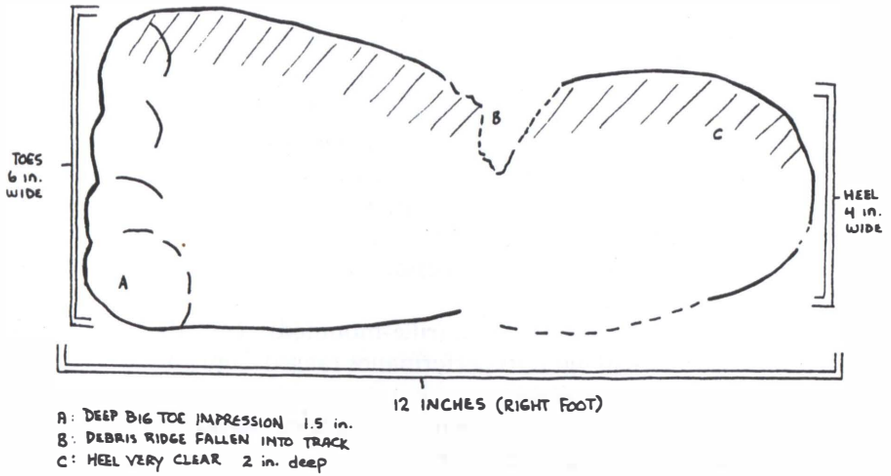

FIG. 1a.—Field sketch of the best of three tracks found on May 24, 1984. This 12-inch track was about 24 inches from the other two, which were only partial tracks.

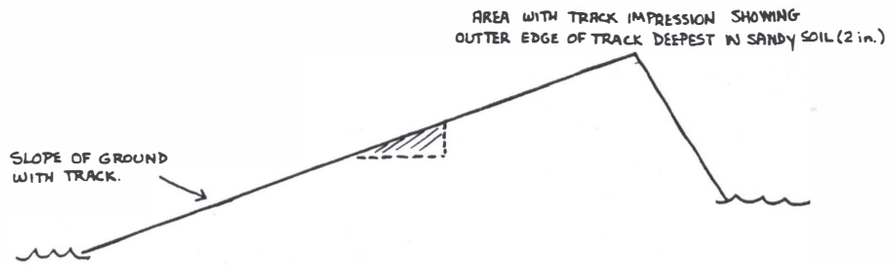

FIG. 1b.—Profile of ground where tracks were found. One partial track was behind and another in front of the full track appearing in Fig. 1a. Gravel and rock formed the ground except for one patch of sand upon which the full track was impressed. A creek flowed on either side of the gravel bar.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

On May 19, 1984, my associate James Wyatt and I were dropped off in the snow on a back country road. A 10-hour hike took us into a valley targeted for the search. Surprisingly, the expected food resources thought to be available were not present, and near-starvation forced us to evacuate the area by a 17-hour trek on May 24.

We found three supposed Sasquatch tracks on our way out, which was heartening, but about which we could do nothing other than take photos and make field sketches. The second track, 12 inches in length, was the best of the three (Fig. 1a, 1b). It was very clear, and only about 24 hours old. The tracks were found on a gravel sand bar in a creek.

After reentry on June 4, 1984, we were subjected to near-freezing temperatures and constant rainfall, which lasted until the 9th. A shelter erected during that time was designated the base camp. It was of logs and brush; no tents or sleeping bags were used. Also, we depended entirely on an all-grain diet, rather than attempt to hunt legal game, as gunfire and blood scent could be counterproductive. We each subsisted on five handfuls of grain a day, with an occasional piece of carefully hoarded salami taken along for its fat content. Our weight allowance permitted us to pack in 3 weeks' worth of food at a time before resupply was necessary. Other equipment included the following three major items:

1) A Starlight night vision scope (rifle-mounted). This PVS-1 military model amplifies ambient light. Its performance ranged from poor to excellent depending on the light available.

2) Several PSID sensors: these are military seismic sensors used for monitoring movement near the base camp.

3) A .338 Winchester magnum rifle, which I feel is of sufficient caliber to bring down a large ape.

Bear (*Ursus americanus*) were encountered often. Our first bear attack occurred on June 9; it resulted from mutual surprise, but turned out well for all. The only other disagreeable encounter was when one stalked me to within 15 feet, at which point it fled when confronted.

A single, good supposed Sasquatch track, 13 inches long, was found in a boggy area on June 17. Fieldwork continued until June 23, the resupply date at which time we hiked out of the valley. As we sat on the roadside waiting, I decided to gather wood to make a small beacon for the expected resupply driver. It was then that we had the most exciting find of the expedition. A large scuff mark between two trees caused me to look further, and I found a series of four good bipedal tracks approximately one hour old. Circumstances indicated that the animal was on the road, heard our approach, and hurriedly fled the area. No other evidence was found at the site. Photos were taken and drawings were made (Fig. 2). The tracks were about 13 inches long, and closely resembled those of May 24. The weight of the animal was estimated at 500 lbs. The time of their deposition was estimated at 7 p.m.

Upon our return to Eureka, California, I was arrested by the Humboldt County Sheriff's Department for possession of an infrared sniper scope. I had taken it to a gunshop to have the mount repaired. The alleged violation was of California Penal Code, Sec. 468, which prohibits the use of infrared sniper scopes except by law enforcement agencies. After 4 days, however, the charges were dropped, the scope was returned, and it was admitted that I possessed only a Starlight scope, which is quite legal.

During that period, Robert Moore replaced James Wyatt as my field associate, although he was only available for 3 weeks. Requisite self-discipline was paramount in any field participant, due to the harsh conditions

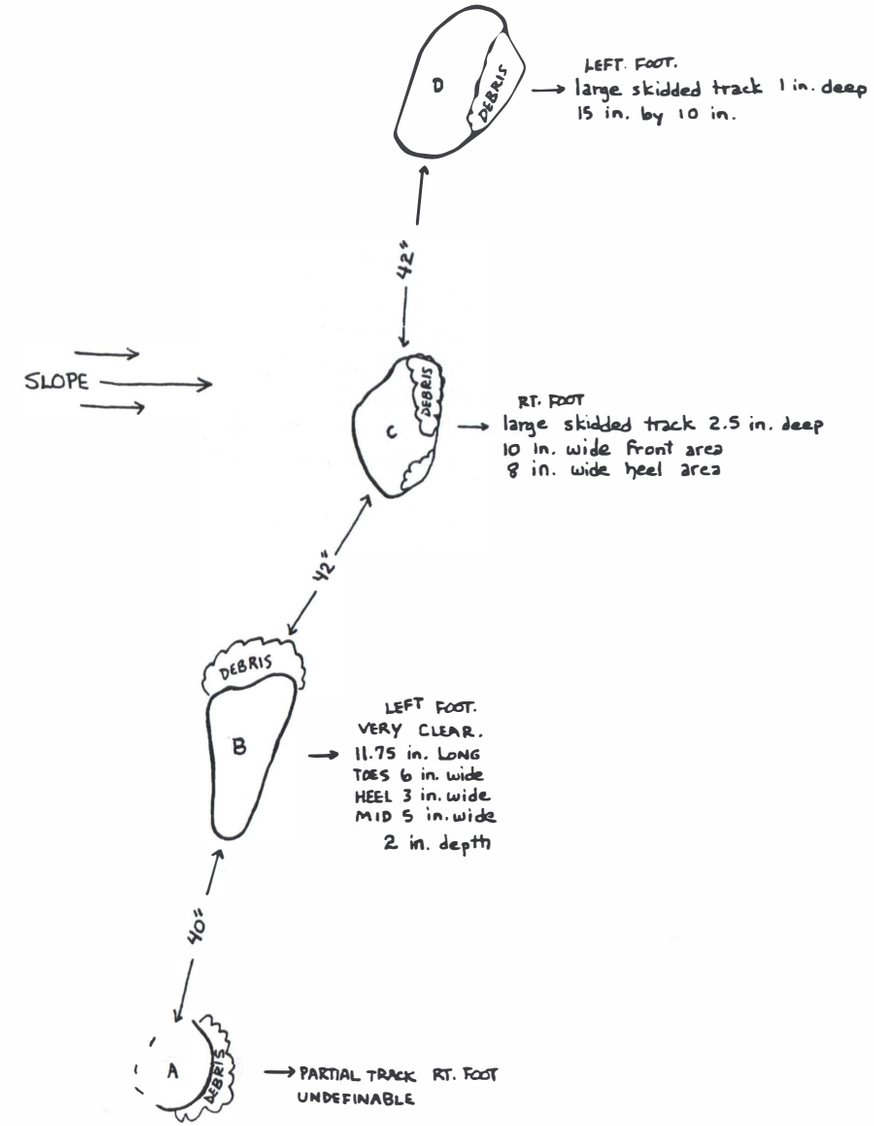

FIG. 2.—Field sketch of four tracks found on June 23, 1984. The tracks were deposited on hard, rocky terrain, and disappeared into rocks and brush. The bipedal animal that made them was probably moving quickly, though not at a run.

of the fieldwork. We not only stalked through rough and difficult terrain, but we were often required to lie immobile for hours in rocks and timber while we observed areas of interest. This was often the case at night also, so sleep was obtained only sporadically.

In July, a scat was found with two sets of tracks (big and small). I estimated them to be about 10 days old. The fecal sample was sent to the International Society of Cryptozoology for analysis, as was a fossil claw found in a stream bed.

No evidence of any note was discovered in August.

As to other animal life encountered, we saw an abundance of bear, deer, grouse, gray squirrels, and mice. Flora comprised first-growth Douglas fir, huge cedars, aspen, and huckleberries. We also encountered patches of a relic plant known commonly as "Cobra lilies."

In no part of the target area did we find any evidence whatsoever of human passage, and, indeed, the nearest human habitation was about 70 miles from us.

The last segment of the expedition I conducted alone, as other participants were not available. By September my funds were exhausted, and the fieldwork was terminated, although I had hoped to continue into mid-October.

Results

The fieldwork resulted in five sets of tracks, most of which consisted of one full track and two or three partials. The ground was very rocky and strewn with forest debris, and tracks of any nature were difficult to locate. The scat is probably too old for enzymal analysis, though dietary information may be extracted, as well as, hopefully, parasitic information. The sample is currently being analyzed.

Other results are a more complete logistical understanding of the requirements for low-profile hunting of this supposed type of animal, with the supposition that the area is deserving of extended scrutiny; three such animals appeared to be using the area.

Future Plans

The author intends to undertake another expedition into this area and an adjoining area in 1985. Funding acquired over the next months will determine whether it will be conducted. Should a Sasquatch specimen eventually be acquired, it will be made available for appropriate scientific study.